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ABSTRACT

In 1984, the Spanish government created Teachers' Centres as part of educational reform. These were intended to improve teacher inservice education and foster professionalism. The pre-Civil War pedagogical culture was somehow maintained in a few movements of "Pedagogical Renovation." The guiding principle of these movements was that schooling is the responsibility of teachers and that change cannot come from the outside, although external support can facilitate school improvement. One project that took place in the first phase of the Teachers' Centres consisted of an inservice activity based on school evaluation, to promote teacher awareness and professional reflective attitudes through systematic analysis of the Educational School Project and the school organizational structure. Five of the larger schools in a rural area participated. The main results were: participants recognized the possibility of learning from peers; the studies carried out by each school; the decisions made as a result of the studies; and the published cooperative article written by all the participants. Another pedagogical renovation movement carried out in a progressive public school in Barcelona and conferences organized in Catalonia are summarized. (Contains 14 references.) (JLS)

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Description of projects illustrative of practitioners' and researchers' relationships

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Reciprocal Conversations: A Spanish model of practitioners and researchers working together.

Teachers are not good conveyors of other people's ideas (L. Stenhouse).

1. Contextual background

The picture of practitioners and researchers working together in Spain is a rich and fruitful one. However, its dimensions are not industrial. It is not produced in a massive automatised way. It is rather a small-scale artistic process with a chronic and fundamental lack of patronage.

The examples of this kind of relationship I will describe in this paper can be found all around Spain. A way to characterise this phenomenon could be food. We cannot think in terms of fast-food restaurants serving the same meals everywhere. A better metaphor is a restaurant run by a group of people who enjoy eating and experiencing with food, who are not afraid of learning from each other and do not construct their personal and professional identities on their social position. In Spain, as in any other country in the world, it is not easy to find the confluence of such factors. Nevertheless, they exist and make amazing processes and achievements feasible.

In Spain, educational research and innovation are relatively new concepts and realisations. As we shown in a previous work (Hernández and Sancho, 1995) the culture of innovation, as it is understood in the United States, was first assumed in the educational reform implemented in 1970 under the so called Ley General de Educación (General Education Law). The OECD endorsed and supervised this reform which tried to apply a technological model of innovation. It was also at that time when, following other countries' policy, the first formal official organism was created to foster and disseminate educational studies and research. However, as it can be seen in the historical approach carried out by Fernando Hernández in this symposium, cultural processes cannot be changed by law. *And top down reforms, especially in a social context highly politically aware as it was Franco's dictatorship for many years, call for conformism, submission and finding ways to avoid any real change or, on the contrary, to active rebellion, search for alternatives and feeling responsible for one's professional and personal life. These latter attitudes have been the ferment of the kind of phenomenon we shall approach at this symposium.*

After the Spanish Civil War, that brought Franco to power, led most intellectuals, educators and teachers to exile or just to death, Spanish teachers had very little expectations about academics. Universities did not train primary education teachers and just a few of them could have an access to Pedagogy as the specialisation of a degree called "Philosophy and Art". Secondary school teachers only needed a university degree in any subject; no pedagogical or professional knowledge were required. Schools and universities ignored each other.

However, the pedagogical culture that preceeded the Civil War with the widespread effect of liberation of the Second Republic was somehow still alive. This culture had many pedagogical influences: from Montessori and Decroly, to Freinet and Malaguzzi, from Ferrer & Guadia, to all the self-organisational ideas derived from anarchism. Perspectives further connected, on the one hand, with Piaget's psychological views about development and, on the other hand, with the curriculum development movement led by Stenhouse in Great Britain.

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In this context, a different Spanish movement of pedagogical renovation maintained a culture, a discourse and a practice based on the idea of ownership. Schooling is, on the whole, the teacher's responsibility and school problems, difficulties and achievements cannot be solved from outside, although external support can facilitate school improvement.

In fact, the first theoretical references from the educational reform of the 90s was Stenhouse's framework and the school-based curriculum development movement of the 70s in Great Britain. This was a way of opposing technological models fostered from USA, in which teachers were seen as mere executors of experts' proposals. In fact, the Spanish progressive educational culture speaks more about 'pedagogical renovation', as a systematic and progressive way of improving one's own knowledge and the professional practice, rather than about innovation or reform. For some people, these concepts, are more linked to novelty than to reflection and deliberation. The obsession for "the new" minimizes or fails to consider accumulated knowledge, and pendular or circular reforms are promoted again and again, without taking advantage of knowledge generated in previous experiences and research in an effective way. This perspective is also perceived as the imitation of an economic and cultural model based on a competitive, individualistic, functional and pragmatic view of life.

The initial steps of the educational reform promoted by the Socialist Party at the beginning of the 80s reflect the values and views of the pedagogical and social perspectives of the pedagogical renovation movements. Such perspectives were practically diluted later on in a curriculum reform where 'experts' were given a great power, when the new educational organic law was approved (Ley Orgánica General del Sistema Educativo -Educational System Organical General Law-)

This background, and the historical perspective provided by Fernando Hernández in this symposium, will help to obtain a better understanding of the meaning and value of the following examples. I chose these among others them because I was directly or very closely implicated in them.

2. Some examples.

2.1. A co-operative activity in a Teachers' Centre.

In 1984 the Spanish government under the Socialist Party and in the mood of an educational reform created the Teachers' Centres as preferent instruments for improving teacher in-service education and fostering teachers' professionalism.

The perspective for teachers' renovation seemed clear: It should overcome two conceptions which had mutually ignored each other for many years and had even been thought of beneath themselves. These two conceptions lay, on the one hand, in the past and present educational ferment made up by those teachers devoted to improving schooling in the pedagogical renovation movements, working groups and seminars and, on the other hand, the official initiatives (Hernández, 1995).

Teachers' Centres provided primary and secondary teachers with an infrastructure for in-service education and professional development. In theory, teachers themselves were in charge of finding and deciding their professional needs and organising the kind of activities which suited them best. They could ask anybody interested enough in the subject to work with them. However, as the educational reform was being shaped, some Centres only summoned those who defended the legitimising language of the educational reform leaving aside those with alternative views.

The example I will expose now took place in the first phase of the Teachers' Centres, before the approval of the law which made the educational reform of the 90s compulsory (LOGSE). In fact, one of the reasons given by some of the participating teachers for not going ahead with the project was that: *they should learn the new curriculum jargon.*

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The project started at the beginning of the academic year 1987-88, when the Pedagogical Council of one of the Teachers' Centre of Utrillas (Teruel)¹ was analysing the in-service proposals for that year. The analyses of in-service teachers' needs provided by this Teachers' Centre, the idea that formative activities should be addressing groups and not only individuals, and the firm conviction that there is an area of teacher education that can only be approached from critical reflection (Sancho, 1988, 1990) led to the formulation of this proposal. The proposal consisted in an in-service activity based on school evaluation, in order to promote teachers awareness and professional, reflective and deliberative attitudes through the systematic analysis of some aspects of the Educational School Project and the organisational school structure. The driving idea was that professional and critical knowledge of the different level of school functioning was not only a fundamental requirement to improve practice, but it should also undertake any kind of school reform.

The five bigger schools of this rural area participated in the project. The project was co-ordinated by personnel from the Teachers' Centre (primary and secondary school teachers) and two university lecturers who were kindly requested to participate (I was one of them). The process was complex and it included different activities: negotiations, school work with all the members of the staff, formative sessions with all the participants, progress sessions with a representative from each school, and so on.

The main results were the participants' recognition of the possibility of learning from peers; the studies carried out by each school, the decisions made from the conclusions driven from the studies, and the co-operative article written by all the participant and published in a well known educational Spanish magazine (Fuentes, Machín, Muñoz, Pardillos, Redón, Sancho, Sanchón, Serrano, Tarín and Zaragoza, 1990). The publication of this article arose the interest of other teachers. The Teachers' Centre and the participants in this formative activity were invited to work with other colleagues.

2.2. A school that wants to learn

At the beginning of the 80s, a progressive public school in Barcelona, with a long and recognised tradition within the pedagogical renovation movement, wanted to analyse, contrast and evaluate its pedagogical practice. The teaching staff asked the Institute of Educational Sciences at the University of Barcelona to appoint an adviser able enough to help them improve their work. The adviser² was appointed, accepted by the school and he started to work with the teacher on the question they wanted to explore: "Are we developing an integrated curriculum?" This first contact resulted in a five-year project. During that time this school reviewed its curriculum and started an on-going teaching and learning process based on project work. This fruitful collaboration between an academic and school staff resulted in the realisation of a set of researches and studies, most of which were published in different journals (Hernández, 1988; ; Hernández, Carbonell & Mases, 1990; Hernández & Minerva group, 1994; De Febrer & Hernández, 1992), the writing of a book (Hernández & Ventura, 1992) and the growth of a movement for an integrated curriculum through project work in many parts of Spain and South America.

2.3. Pedagogical Renovation Movements: complement or supplement?

As I suggested above, the Pedagogical Renovation Movements in Spain, mainly run by primary and secondary school teachers, were the only source of educational progressive knowledge for many years.

¹ A remote rural zone.

² This adviser happen to be Fernando Hernández.

Even nowadays, all these teachers' movements organise Summer and Winter Schools (they also used to do it in the past), most of the times without any kind of official support. Academics were and are often invited to participate in these type of events. The educational knowledge and practice accumulated by these movements plays an important role in the Spanish history of education. Hence, it is totally impossible to summarise it all, so I will refer to one of the last events organised by the Confederation of Catalan Pedagogical Renovation Movements.

A few years ago, this Confederation launched the idea of a Conference in order to put together all the states within the civil society to discuss the state of the art of education and the challenges for the next millennium. People leading this initiative were primary and secondary school teachers.

The event was exposed in different fora, including Universities. More than one thousand people (teachers, academics, parents, students, unions, and so on) became interested. Groups of these people discussed for two years every issue related to education in different towns and about many different topics. From curriculum to values, from culture to new technologies, from bilingualism to diversity,....

Throughout the past two years, apart from the working groups, more than 12 thematic conferences were organised all around the whole of Catalonia. Several publications were arranged and the event had a certain presence in the media (in Spain, in general, education does not raise the interest of the media). The final act of this vast activity consisted in a big Conference held in Barcelona on February 1996. About one thousand people from all fields and subjects attended it. The conclusions of all this process are published in books and educational journals (among others, *Renovació Pedagògica*, 1994: 1995: 1996; Guix, 1996). School teachers and academics, once more, were happily working together and, most important, learning from each other.

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